

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING MR. WILLIE “SONNY BOY” WILLIAMSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 19, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a blues musician and legend of the Mississippi Delta, Mr. Willie “Sonny Boy” Williamson.

Mr. Speaker, the “Blues” is not just a song, it’s a story about hard times and frustration put to musical rhymes and rhythms; it’s a means to an end. The Blues was influenced by field hollers, religious hymns of hope, and even dance. So let me share a blues story with you through the life of Mr. Willie “Sonny Boy” Williamson.

If you happen to hear the names, Alex “Rice” Miller, Sonny Boy Williamson number 2, Sonny Boy Williamson the second, Willie Miller, Sonny Boy Miller, or Little Boy Blue, just know that it’s the same Willie “Sonny Boy” Williamson of Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. His birth given name however, is Alex Miller. There are different reports circulating about when Sonny Boy was born. The dates in question are 1897, December 5, 1899, March 11, 1908, and December 5, 1912. He was born on the Sara Jones Plantation near Glendora, Mississippi. Nevertheless, it was not until 1941 that he began to assume the name of “Sonny Boy” Williamson when Max Moore, owner of Interstate Grocer Company’s King Biscuit Flour business, started calling him by that name in order to promote the show.

Although researchers and historians alike have debated important dates and events surrounding his life, one thing they all agree upon is that he is a son of the Mississippi Delta blues, a self taught harmonica player, and a legendary blues singer and song writer. He began playing the guitar and harmonica at the early age of five. Sonny Boy’s stepfather and mother, Jim and Millie Miller, never discouraged him from playing his blues music or his instruments.

Mississippi was a very implacable place for blacks in the 1900s with the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement, efforts to pass life changing legislations, and when cotton pickers were paid about forty cents a day per one hundred pounds of cotton picked. The blues music was filled with lyrics about those times, bad luck, hope, and memories experienced or seen by the blues artist. Unrelenting beats accompanied the lyrics of the songs as the artist told their story.

In the early 1920’s, Sonny Boy was a young man struggling to make a living, so he started performing in juke joints and night clubs throughout Mississippi and Arkansas under the name of Little Boy Blue. The pay was very meager or sometimes there was no pay at all. By the 1930s he left a life of sharecropping and cotton picking in Tallahatchie County and

started becoming a familiar voice and blues artist on the local circuits. He played on the street corners, at church socials, fish fry’s, and anywhere he could attract a crowd, sometimes getting paid. Sonny Boy made friends with other blues artists like Big Joe Williams, Elmore James, Joe Willie “Pinetop” Perkins, Robert Lockwood, Jr., and Robert Johnson. He was always looking for ways to entertain besides just singing, so he started doing what some might call impossible until they saw him do it—he would put his entire harmonica in his mouth and play it with no hands, wow, what a talent.

The 1940s was just as entertaining and by now, Sonny Boy’s blues future was beginning to take shape. In 1941 he was hired to play on the King Biscuit Time show where he did advertisement for King Biscuit Flour on a radio station (KFFA) in Helena, Arkansas. The sponsors thought he would be perfect to advertise King Biscuit Flour to the black audience King Biscuit wanted to reach. He partnered with fellow blues artist Robert Lockwood for this gig and they became known as the King Biscuit Boys. The show was limited in range, only reaching an audience within about a 50 miles radius. As a result, he quietly started doing radio shows in Little Rock Arkansas, and Belzoni, Mississippi, outside of the range of KFFA. Then in the late 1940s KFFA extended its listening audience through WROX in Clarksdale, Mississippi in the late 1940s, which was far enough for Sonny Boy to reach the ears of young Riley King, known as B.B. King, over in Indianola, Mississippi. On Saturdays, the KFFA King Biscuit Entertainers would visit grocery stores performing on King Biscuit’s flatbed truck throughout Northern Mississippi delta towns like Sardis and Clarksdale. In 1944, his picture appeared on Sonny Boy Corn Meal and he became a household name.

Sonny Boy figured out he had a knack for the radio and he could make money doing it. So, he started his own KWEM radio show in 1948 until 1950. He moved to West Memphis, Arkansas in 1949 to live with his sister and her husband, Howlin’ Wolf; another blues legend from White Station, Mississippi. This was his golden opportunity where he brought along other struggling great blues artists before they were greats. These were friends like James Cotton, Houston Stackhouse, Elmore James, B.B. King, Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup, Robert Nighthawk and others to perform on the show.

Sonny Boy finally got to record one of his many stories about the blues; it came in 1951 with his first single on Trumpet Records titled “Eyesight to the Blind,” where he was singing about a woman. Using the word “good” to describe him was not good enough; people often said that with this song he could make a blind man think he could see her. He was the primary artist for Trumpet Records. Henry and Lillian McMurry in Jackson, Mississippi were the owners. In 1955, he began recording for Chess Records in Chicago, Illinois after Trumpet Records went bankrupt. His years at

Chess Records were his most successful in his career as a blues artist. In fact, he recorded about 70 songs from 1955 to 1964 for Checker Records, a subsidiary of Chess Records. In 1959 he finally got the opportunity to record a compilation of stories about the blues with his first LP record titled Down and Out Blues. It featured such hits as Dissatisfied, Your Funeral and My Trial, Don’t Start Me to Talkin, and All My Love in Vain.

In the 1960s, he toured Europe several times during the height of the British blues excitement; having much influence on the Blues music he recorded with The Yardbirds, Eric Clapton, guitarist Jimmy Page, The Animals, and even Mississippi Slim of Greenville. In the summer of 1964, he did a BBC TV show with jazz musician Chris Barber. He also recorded with Roland Kirk, another jazz musician, who could play three horns at the same time. It was reported in the Led Zeppelin biography that while in England, Sonny Boy accidentally set his hotel room on fire while trying to cook a rabbit in a coffee percolator.

Home sick for the Mississippi Delta area, the local blues circuit he started on, to see old friends, down home cooking and living, to hang out with new corners to the blues scene, and to play on KFFA again—all beginnings he wanted cash in for better endings, Willie “Sonny Boy” Williamson returned to Helena, Arkansas to live until his death in June 1965 from a heart attack. Sonny Boy Williamson was born on the Sara Jones Plantation near Glendora, Mississippi and buried on New Africa Road just outside of Tutwiler, Mississippi at the site of the former Whitman Chapel Cemetery. These towns are approximately 15 miles apart. His headstone was paid for and donated by Mrs. Lillian McMurray, owner of Trumpet Records, another one of his beginnings.

Over the course of Sonny Boy Williamson’s career, he recorded over 150 songs, from 1951 and 1965. He wrote and composed most of his own songs, many of which were recorded more than once. A musical prodigy in his own rights and style, he was able to make each performance unique and different through impromptu styles of arrangements, tempos and lyrics.

Sonny Boy Williamson may have been characterized by a hip flask, British bowler sit’n high on his head cocked to the side, tailored made two-tone suits, a foul mouth, fast women, short tempered, and a grey goateed image, but don’t forget about the characterization of his musical ability. He was highly original with his own signature harmonica style and vocal gift for moaning out a rich blues saga. Just as I stated earlier, there is no doubt about it, he had the blues.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mr. Willie “Sonny Boy” Williamson, a world renowned blues legend and artist from the Mississippi Delta. He is truly worthy to be recognized.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

MR. MARSHALL S. JACOBSON, ESQ.
AND MRS. APRIL JACOBSON

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 19, 2012

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Marshall S. Jacobson, Esq. and Mrs. April Jacobson, who are being honored by Temple B'nai B'rith for their service to the temple and the community.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacobson have served as exemplary community leaders. Mr. Jacobson has been affiliated with the Wilkes-Barre law firm of Rosenn, Jenkins, and Greenwald since 1968 and became a partner in 1973. They have three sons and four grandchildren.

Mr. Jacobson earned his bachelor's degree in 1959 from the Pennsylvania State University and his law degree from the Dickinson School of Law in 1962. Mr. and Mrs. Jacobson first met while they were employed by the Internal Revenue Service in Washington, DC. They married in 1966 and relocated to the Wilkes-Barre area in 1968.

Mr. Jacobson has had a distinguished career serving individual, corporate, charitable, and non-profit clients for over 40 years. He is dedicated to his community and has served as a member, officer, and director of numerous organizations including Temple B'nai B'rith, Temple Apartments, United Cerebral Palsy, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul Kitchen, and Kiwanis Club of Mountain Top.

Furthermore, Mr. and Mrs. Jacobson are both deeply admired for their strong faith and continual devotion to family. Together, they have served our community loyally.

Mr. Speaker, today, Mr. Marshall S. Jacobson, Esq. and Mrs. April Jacobson stand as leaders in Northeastern Pennsylvania. I commend them for their years of admirable service to our community and country, and I wish them continued success in the future.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SOLOMON SCHECHTER DAY SCHOOL OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 19, 2012

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Solomon Schechter Day School of Metropolitan Chicago, on the occasion of the school's 50th anniversary.

For five decades, Solomon Schechter Day School has served Jewish children and families in the Chicago area, integrating Judaic studies with general education. Founded in 1962, the school was founded with the vision of helping students understand their Jewish and American lives as an integrated whole. Solomon Schechter Day School continues to provide an extended community where students and families are encouraged to explore their Jewish identity in a positive environment.

From the first 27 students who enrolled in 1962, more than 2,500 graduates of Solomon Schechter have gone on to play leading roles throughout the Chicago area and across the world. The school currently serves 550 chil-

dren from 30 communities in the Chicago area. Today, Solomon Schechter Day School of Metropolitan Chicago is a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade Jewish day school, with an Early Childhood Center located in Skokie, and a K-8 school in Northbrook. Students at Solomon Schechter Day School attend over 40 synagogues, and come from families with roots in the United States, Israel, Chile, Argentina, Russia, Ethiopia, and more.

As a member of Congress, it has been my privilege to welcome Solomon Schechter students to Washington for many years. I have been consistently impressed by the maturity, knowledge, and inquisitive spirit of the students I have met. They are students who want to make a difference in their community, their country and the world. Solomon Schechter Day School gives them the education, support, and resources to do so.

For fifty years, Solomon Schechter Day School has empowered students to think critically, while also teaching them to live Jewish values and honor timeless traditions. It is my great privilege to join the Solomon Schechter Day School community in celebrating the fifty years of serving Jewish students and families in the Chicago area, and I look forward to many exciting years to come.

HONORING MRS. BERNITA "BERT" DIXON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 19, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a woman with an angelic voice, Bernita "Bert" Dixon.

Bernita Dixon is a lifelong resident of Copiah County, Mississippi. She was born on October 14, 1952 in Georgetown, Mississippi to the late Rev. Earl Carver Dixon and Lena Mae Cathchings Dixon. She graduated from Holtzclaw Memorial High School in Crystal Springs, Mississippi. Bernita attended Utica Junior College in Utica, Mississippi where she majored in Pre-Nursing.

She began singing at the early age of five. She would often sing at church, in the cotton field and any other place people would listen. She quickly became known for her strong voice. However, her stardom came with a price. She started to get tired of everyone wanting her to sing, so she blurted out; "I'm tired of always having to sing". Shortly thereafter Bernita was diagnosed with laryngitis and couldn't talk. She then prayed "Lord, please give me back my voice, I will sing for you for the rest of my life". Her voice returned more powerful and deeper than before. Later her brother decided to form a singing group with her and the rest of their siblings, "The Dixon Singers". The Dixon Singers have performed with several nationally known artists. Also, the Dixon Singers were the first group to ever record a double volume live album in the state of Mississippi.

Bernita is married to Gene Robinson. She is the mother of three, Derrick, Kenmantel and the late Ronrico. Bernita has worked as the Office Manager at Dixon Body & Auto Sales, Inc. in Hazlehurst, Mississippi since 1993. She is a member of New Hope M. B. Church in Georgetown, Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Bernita "Bert" Dixon for her dedication and desire to share her voice with us.

HONORING JOHN GREENWOOD

HON. JANICE HAHN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 19, 2012

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of John Greenwood who died on October 11, 2012 at the age of 67. Born on January 9, 1945, John earned a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Political Science from the University of California, Riverside, and a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Michigan. John had a 45-year career as an educator and civic leader in the South Bay and Harbor Area. John was first elected to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Board of Education in 1979, where he served for eight years as both a member and its president advocating for quality education.

Long active in community affairs, John served as Chair of the City of Los Angeles Citizens' Oversight Commission for Proposition Q managing a \$650 million Fire and Police renovation program and was the founding President and a board member of the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council. Several years ago, while on the Los Angeles City Council, I had the pleasure to appoint John to head up a task force charged with studying the Ponte Vista housing development. He was the founder and later served as President of the Gang Alternatives Program that strives to enhance the lives of the young people in our community. John served on the boards of numerous community organizations including the San Pedro Boys and Girls Club, the San Pedro Rotary Club, and as Vice President of the Board of Directors of Angels Gate Cultural Center.

At the time of his death, John was President of Coro Southern California. His involvement in Coro spanned more than 40 years. Through the years, John received many awards. He was particularly pleased to be honored as Community Builder by Habitat for Humanity and to receive the Founders Award from the Southern California Leadership Network.

John is survived by his wife, Caren and daughter, Liz, and his brother Roger (Peggy) Greenwood, sister Marilyn (Savin) Ungaro, sister Kathy (Tom) Jefferies, mother-in-law Martha Matthews, sister-in-law Darlene Allenthrop. I consider myself incredibly lucky to have known John and to have considered him a close friend.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LONG BRANCH FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY CHAMPIONS

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 19, 2012

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the five individuals being honored by the Long Branch Free Public Library on the